1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

nities, unreasonable harshness in behaviour or rough handling. Payments differ on the basis of the quality and quantity of work they turn out, and also partly on the nature and temperament of the employer. Slow and lazy workers are paid the barest minimum, while the experienced and the efficient earn much more. In the words of a Madiga, 'If we do not work well, who will pay us? If we do very little work and that too badly, we get what we deserve in the end. If we do not work well we cannot afford to be sensitive; we have to be thick-skinned to stand the abuse of our master. But if we work hard and earn our wages by the sweat of our brow, the master has to treat us well.' To quote another informant: 'Some masters are large-hearted. They make us work hard, but they feed us well. Others expect us to work like oxen, but when it comes to feeding us they dole out mere handfuls as if we were little calves. They always grumble and curse, but when it is time for making payment to us they seem to forget that we too must have a morsel to fill our bellies and a yard of cloth to cover our bodies.' In addition to what the Madiga families get by 'begging' at the time of harvesting, during the busy agricultural season they are fed once a day by the master. According to convention, the master should give a new cloth once every year to each individual from the attached Madiga family who has worked in his fields.

Very few Madigas possess any land worth mentioning, and therefore independent cultivation by them is almost negligible. But they have several other additional means of subsistence open to them. They have to dispose of the dead cattle in the village. As they do not refrain from carrion, this constitutes one source of food supply for them. They are also entitled to get one half of the hide of the dead animal; the other half belongs to the owner. From the owner's share of the hide the Madigas have to make for him such leather articles as he may require for agricultural purposes. Several Madiga families cure hides and work in leather; others earn a part of their living by playing drums and pipes at ceremonial occasions.

2. AGRICULTURE

The settled area of Shamirpet, including the two neighbouring hamlets, is spread over an area of 58 acres. Out of this Shamirpet proper occupies 31·4 acres. In the land surrounding the settlement,

585 distributes invitations, offers his occupational services in matters of haircutting and shaving, and at the wedding itself, at the time of important rites during the night, holds a lighted torch. The potter supplies the large quantity of earthenware needed for the different [533] rituals as well as for cooking. No marriage ceremony can be performed without the essential instrumental music played by the Madigas. The carpenter has to make the marriage-post, and other wooden fixtures as well, if they are required. The marriage rites require small payments to these occupational castes in the course of the ceremony itself. At the completion of the ceremony, depending on the means of the family, they are paid once again for their labours.

586 587 Divorce and widow re-marriage are allowed in all castes except the Brahmin and the Komti. Divorce or 'driving away the wife' is not very common. In the 380 marriages studied by us there were only 79 cases of desertion and divorce. In all such cases the elders, the village council and the caste council intervene and the parties involved in the dispute have to abide by their decisions.

595 Brahmins do not conduct the re-marriage of widows. Polygyny is permitted among the Hindus; but it is rare. At the time of our investigation there were only seven polygynous Hindu homes in the village.

584 Among the Muslims the standard marriage ritual prescribed by Islam is adhered to with some regional and local variations. Marriage negotiations are initiated by the boy's people, and when they are successful a date for the *nikah* (rites of marriage) is fixed

585 by them in consultation with a Muslim marriage priest. Four days before the actual wedding preliminary rites are started. The ceremony opens with the rite of *manjah* in which the womenfolk of the two sides grind turmeric in their respective homes, and playfully throw turmeric and coloured water on each other in their separate groups. On the second day the groom's people go to the bride's home with gifts for her. These gifts include jewellery, clothes and bangles. The bride is then garlanded by a responsible person from the groom's side; and a little later, with her mother's permission, *missi* (a thick black paste) is applied to her lips and teeth. This symbolizes the actual beginning of the wedding rites. On the third morning, the bride's people (with the exception of her mother) go to the groom's place. They take presents for the bridegroom, and he is garlanded by a younger sister or cousin of

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and eat the food entirely concealed from view, probably to prevent the evil spirits from seeing them, or the evil eye from striking them. And then some more food is served to the Asādis, who have been for many hours, during the ceremonies of the night, chanting the praises of the goddess. After this the villagers bring their offerings. The Brāhmans, who may not kill animals, bring rice and cocoanuts, and other castes bring lambs, goats, sheep, fowls, and buffaloes, which are all killed by the washermen, by cutting their throats, except the buffaloes, which are always killed by the Mādigās, the lowest class of Outcastes. The heads are all cut off and presented to the goddess. This lasts till about three p.m., when the people go off to the house of the village carpenter, who has got ready a small wooden cart. On their arrival some cooked rice is offered to the cart, and a lamb sacrificed before it, and a new cloth and eight annas are given to the carpenter as his fee. The cart is then dragged by the washermen, to the sound of horns and tom-toms, to the place of sacrifice. The heads and carcasses of the animals already sacrificed are first removed by the Mālās and Mādigās, except the head of the buffalo first offered, which remains in its place till all the ceremonies are finished, when the shrine is removed.

At about seven p.m. another series of ceremonies begins. First a lamb is sacrificed before the goddess, and its blood mixed with some cooked rice, and at the same time a pig is buried up to the neck in a pit at the entrance of the village, with its head projecting above the earth. The villagers go in procession to the spot, while one of the Mādigās carries the rice, soaked in the blood of the lamb, in a basket. All the cattle of the village are then brought to the place and driven over the head of the unhappy pig,[1] which is, of course, trampled to death; and, as they pass over the pig, the blood and rice are sprinkled upon them to preserve them from disease. Then, after this, follows the final ceremony.

[1] Cf. p 58 below.

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The image of the goddess is taken from the canopy by the washerman, and a Mādigā takes the head of the buffalo with its foreleg in the mouth, the forehead and nostrils all smeared over with fat, and the earthen lamp still lighted on the top. They then all go in procession to the boundary of the village, first the men carrying the buffalo's head, next the washerman with the image, and last the small wooden cart. When the procession arrives at the extreme limit of the village lands, they go on, for about a furlong, into the lands of the neighbouring village. There the Asādis first chant the praises of the goddess, then some turmeric is distributed to all the people, and finally the image is divested of all its ornaments and solemnly placed upon the ground and left there. The light on the head of the buffalo is extinguished, and the head itself carried off by the Mādigā, who takes it for a feast to his own house. The object of transporting the goddess to the lands of the next village is to transfer to that village the wrath of the deity, a precaution which does not show much faith in the temper of the goddess, nor much charity towards their neighbours!

Gudivada, near Masulipatam. A somewhat different form of ceremonial prevails in some of the villages of the Telugu country nearer the coast. The village of Gudivada, about twenty miles from the important town of Masulipatam, may be taken as a good specimen of a well-to-do village in a prosperous district, and the ceremonies prevailing there are a fair sample of the cult of the village deities in these parts.

The name of the village deity at Gudivada is Pallalamma. Her image is the figure of a woman with four arms, and a leopard's head under her right foot, carved in bas-relief on a flat stone about three feet high, standing in an open compound, surrounded by a low stone wall. The pūjārī, who is a Śūdra, gave me a full account of the rites and ceremonies. Weekly offerings are made every Sunday, when the pujari washes the image with water and soap-nut seeds early in the morning, and smears it with turmeric

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and kunkuma, offers incense, breaks a cocoanut, and cooks and presents to the image about a seer of rice, which he afterwards eats himself. The rice is provided daily by the villagers. Occasionally fowls and sheep are offered on the Sunday by villagers who have made vows in time of sickness or other misfortunes. When a sheep is sacrificed, it is first purified by washing. The animal is simply killed in front of the image by a Mādigā, who cuts off its head with a large chopper. The blood is allowed to flow on the ground and nothing special is done with it. The head becomes the perquisite of the pūjārī, and the offerer takes away the carcass for a feast in his house. In many villages, both in the Telugu and Tamil districts, water is poured over the sheep's back to see whether it shivers. If it shivers, it is a sign that the goddess has accepted it.[1] Where the people are economical, they keep on pouring water till it does shiver, to avoid the expense of providing a second victim, but, where they are more scrupulous, if it does not shiver, it is taken as a sign that the goddess will not accept it and it is taken away.

A public festival is held whenever an epidemic breaks out. The headman of the village then gets a new earthenware pot, besmears it with turmeric and kunkuma and puts inside some clay bracelets, some necklaces, and ear-rings, three pieces of charcoal, three pieces of turmeric, three pieces of incense, a piece of dried cocoanut, a woman's cloth, and two annas' worth of coppers—a strange collection of miscellaneous charms and offerings. The pot is then hung up in a tree near the image, as a pledge that, if the epidemic disappears, the people will celebrate a festival.

When it does disappear, a thatched shed of palmyra leaves is built near the image, and a special image of clay, adorned with turmeric and kunkuma, is put inside, and beneath it an earthen pot filled with buttermilk and boiled rice. This pot is also smeared with turmeric and

[1] For this widespread superstition see Sir Alfred Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, i, 19. Cf. pp. 63, 68, 69, 73, 99, below.

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kunkuma, adorned with margosa leaves, covered with an earthenware saucer, and carried in procession through the village during the day, to the exhilarating sound of pipes, horns, and tom-toms, by the village potter, who takes the rice and buttermilk for his perquisite and renews it every morning of the festival at the public expense. The duration of the festival depends on the amount of the subscriptions, but it always lasts for an odd number of days, excluding all numbers with a seven in them, *e.g.* 7, 17, 27, etc. During the night the barbers of the village chant the praises of the goddess, and the Mādigās beat tom-toms near the image.

On the night before the day appointed for the offering of animal sacrifices by the villagers, a male buffalo, called Devara Potu, *i.e.* devoted to the deity, is sacrificed on behalf of the whole village. First, the buffalo is washed with water, smeared with yellow turmeric and red kunkuma, and then garlanded with flowers and the leaves of the sacred margosa tree. It is brought before the image; and a Mādigā cuts off its head, if possible at one blow, over a heap of boiled rice, which becomes soaked with the blood. The right foreleg is then cut off and placed crosswise in its mouth, according to the widespread custom prevailing in South India, the fat of the entrails is smeared over the eyes and forehead, and the head is placed in front of the image. A lighted lamp is placed, not as in the other villages on the head itself, but on the heap of rice soaked with blood. This rice is then put into a basket; and a Mādigā, the village *vetty* or sweeper, carries it round the site of the village, sprinkling it on the ground as he goes. The whole village goes with him, but there is no music or tom-toms. The people shout out as they go "Poli! Poli!" *i.e.* "Food! Food!" and clap their hands and wave their sticks above their heads to keep off the evil spirits. The rice offered to the goddess, but not soaked with blood, is then distributed to the people. What spirits the rice soaked in blood is supposed to feed is not clear, but the object of sprinkling the blood is evidently to ward off evil spirits